

Deputy Chief, Economic Research, ORR

25 August 1958

THRU : Deputy Chief, Industrial Division, ORR
Deputy Chief, Guided Missile Branch, D/I

Evaluation of Special Weapons Orientation Course at Sandia Base,
New Mexico

1. The Special Weapons Orientation Course given by the Armed Forces Special Weapons Project (AFSWP) at Sandia Base is designed to acquaint relatively senior military commanders and civilian personnel with the status, scope and implications of the U.S. nuclear energy program, primarily in its weapons applications. The principal subjects covered are the fundamental principles involved in fission and fusion, their application to weapons and warheads, the characteristics and specifications of current and projected U.S. special weapons, the effects of nuclear weapons, and the various delivery vehicles and employment methods available. Less attention is devoted to a number of related topics, such as production of active material, logistics, organizational structure, comparative costs, test programs, foreign capabilities, non-weapons applications and the impact of special weapons on military planning. Although the course covers a vast and complicated subject very rapidly, it is exceptionally well presented and includes opportunities to inspect actual weapons, delivery aircraft and related facilities. My only major criticism is that the value of the course is reduced considerably by the prohibition of note-taking on any of the lectures or other presentations.

2. In my judgment, the course would be of considerable value to senior ERA supervisors and analysts whose responsibilities require a broad appreciation of the potentialities of nuclear weapons or who are doing research in fields directly affected by special weapons considerations. Future ERA candidates for the course might be selected from among any of the following who have appropriate clearance and who have not received similar orientation since the advent of thermo-nuclear weapons:

Ch/E and/or D/Ch/E
Ch/D/I and/or D/Ch/D/I
Ch/I/GM and senior I/GM analysts
Ch/I/ME and senior I/ME analysts
Ch/I/AR and senior I/AR analysts

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**SUBJECT: Evaluation of Sepcial Weapons Orientation Course at
Sandia Base, New Mexico**

Ch/D/M and/or D/Ch/D/M

Members of M/FP/N

Ch/D/S and/or D/Ch/D/S

Ch/S/CST and [REDACTED] S/CST

Ch/St/CS

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3. No specialized background is required for the course except a superficial understanding of nuclear physics and an ability to absorb rapidly large quantities of information and black coffee.

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ENCLOSURE 2

Schedule for Special Weapons
Orientation Course Offerings

22 September 1958

29 September 1958

17 November 1958

1 December 1958

8 December 1958

19 January 1959

25 May 1959

15 June 1959